

A FUNERAL  
SERMON

Occasioned by the  
DEATH

Of the very Religious  
Mrs. *Elizabeth Fleetwood*,

Preach'd at  
STOKE NEWINGTON,  
*June 23, 1728.*

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By JOHN ASTY.

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L O N D O N :

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STERMON

D. W. H.

Mrs. J. W. H.



Stone & Newington

D. JOHN ASTY

LONDON

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T O

Mrs. *Frances*, Mrs. *Carolina*,  
and Mrs. *Jane Fleetwood*;  
and to the other near Re-  
latives of that worthy Fa-  
mily.

Honoured FRIENDS,

**I**T is the peculiar Advantage of true Religion, as it is a vital Principle within, correspondent to the excellent Revelation on which it is founded, that it furnishes real Christians with the most solid Grounds of Comfort under the sharpest Trials, and disposes them to the great Duty of Submission upon the highest Reasons.

*It has pleased the All-wise Sovereign to call You to the Exercise of that Faith and Resignation, that are supported by the divine Principles of Christianity. His Hand has, of late, made frequent Breaches in Your Family, and now again has touch'd You very sore. I heartily condole with You the Loss of so valuable, and dear a Relative: She is lost indeed to our World, but she is arrived to immortal Glory, and everlasting Rest is her Gain.*

*It is the Will of God, that there should be so soon again an additional Sorrow upon You, by the very sudden Death of \* one, nearly related to some of You, and much valued by You all, a very excellent and useful Person; a great Loss it is not only to particular Relatives, but to the Publick.*

*May such afflictive Providences be very instructive to us who survive, that we may take a more close View of the eternal World, and be excited to the utmost Seriousness and Diligence in a religious*

*\* Sir Nathaniel Gould.*



## DEDICATION. V

*religious Course, being Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.*

*It is an high Honour divine Grace has put upon Your Families, that there have been so many among them truly Pious, and some of them eminently distinguish'd for Their Faith and Holiness, and for Their great Usefulness. The Names of the FLEETWOOD's and HARTOPP's have been for many Years past very honourable in the Churches of Christ, and it is with Pleasure we observe several Branches, and other Relatives of those worthy Families, treading the same Paths of serious Religion and Virtue.*

*It has been esteem'd a Favour of divine Providence to me, that my earliest Service in the Ministry was devoted to Your Family, wherein I lived many Years; and whatever spiritual Advantage has accru'd to any of You from that Service, I rejoice, and with You desire to ascribe the Glory of all the Success to our gracious God.*

vi DEDICATION.

I acknowledge with great Thankfulness, the many Instances of that kind Respect I have received from You all, and shall always value the Friendship of Your Families, as a great Privilege and Pleasure of Life.

May the God of all Grace, and of all Comfort, enrich You all with Grace and Peace, comfort You under Your present Trials, and make You great Blessings to each other, in the Continuance of that exemplary Love that has long reign'd amongst You. May You still be more eminent in Piety and Holiness, and at last obtain the Crown of Life; which is the sincere Desire, and earnest Prayer of,



Your most faithful,

affectionate, humble Servant,

July 24,  
1728.

JOHN ASTY.

## J O B ix. 12.

*Behold, he taketh away, who  
can binder him? Who will  
say unto him, What doest  
thou?*

**I**N this Chapter *Job* returns an Answer to *Bildad's* Charge against him, as if he had complain'd of God's dealing unjustly with him, *Chap. viii. ver. 3.* He refutes the unjust Censure, and acknowledges that God was very just in all that he had inflicted on him, *ver. 1, 2, 3.* He goes on to set forth the Greatness and Power of God, *ver. 4—10.* and confesses his own Weakness, that he was not able to fathom the Depths of God's unsearchable Ways. *Ver. 11.* *Lo! He goeth by me, and I see him not: He passeth on also, but I perceive him not.* "I am not able to trace him in the  
" Methods of his Government, to give the  
" Reasons, or to understand the Ends of all  
" his Dispensations." *Psal. lxxvii. 19. His  
Way*

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*Way is in the Sea, his Path in the great Waters, and his Footsteps are not known. Behold, he taketh away, Who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou?*

*First*, Here is an Assertion of God's sovereign Dominion. *Behold, he taketh away!* *Behold*, is here a Note of Attention, and of Adoration. *Chap. xxxvi. 24—26. Behold, Goa is Great, and we know him not!* And this is one Act of his sovereign Dominion, *He taketh away*. This Act of God in taking away may extend to various Instances, wherein he shews his great Power; and particularly, it is sometimes applied to the taking away of Life. *Psal. cii. 24. Take me not away in the midst of my Days.* Thus *Elijah* makes his Request, *1 Kings xix. 4. O Lord, I beseech thee, take away my Life.* Behold, he taketh away, not only Estate, Children, Friends, Health, Peace, but Life also, when he please! He is the God in whose Hand our Breath is, *Dan. v. 23.*

*Secondly*, Here is a double Interrogation with respect to this sovereign Act of God's Dominion, which implies a strong Negation, and a strict Prohibition.

1. *A strong Negation. Who can hinder him?* None can resist, or prevent the Execution of his Purpose, if he resolves to take away. The Word signifies, to turn, or  
cause



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cause to return; that is, Who can alter his Mind, or hinder him from accomplishing it? *Job xxiii. 13. He is in one Mind, and who can turn him?* or, Who can cause him to restore? as the word may be rendred. He is Righteous, and may do as he please; he can do no wrong.

2. *A strict Prohibition. Who will say unto him, What doest thou?* His Will is not to be disputed, any more than his Power can be resisted. None can, without the highest Insolence, presume to call him to an Account, or censure his Conduct.

*Job xxxvi. 23. Who hath enjoined him his Way?* *Dan. iv. 35. None can stay his Hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

The doctrinal Proposition, which will be the Subject of our Discourse, is this,

*Observ. The great God, when he takes away the most valuable Persons, and dearest Comforts, must be adored with humble Silence, and low Submission.*

In handling this Doctrine, I shall observe this Method,

- I. Shew what are those Strokes of God's Hand in taking away, that are so very cutting.
- II. What should be our Behaviour under such heavy Strokes.

B

III.



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III. What are the Reasons of that Behaviour.

IV. Application.

I. What are those Strokes of God's Hand, when he takes away, that are so very cutting.

Every Stroke of his Rod, every Blow of his Hand, demands our Attention, and we ought to give our Father Reverence whenever he corrects, but sometimes he rises up out of his Place, and shews himself very awful in this Act of his Dominion. *Behold, he taketh away!*

1. Sudden Changes are very surprizing. When we are at Ease, in the quiet Enjoyment of pleasing Comforts; in Health, Peace and Prosperity, and we are ready to think our Mountain stands strong, a sovereign God breaks in upon us, and takes away this or the other Blessing without any Warning. It may be, we were too fond, and pleased our selves with a Prospect of much Satisfaction in such valuable Comforts, and, lo! a sudden Stroke dashes all the Prospect, leaving us in a sorrowful Disappointment. Terrible Things which we looked not for are the more afflictive. *Isa. lxiv. 3. Job* in the Height of his Ease and Prosperity was on a sudden brought down to the Dust, stripp'd of all in a few Days, *Chap. i.*

2. It is a great Trial of Faith and Submission, when God repeats his Strokes, and mul-

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multiplies our Losses, Breach upon Breach, Sorrow upon Sorrow: He not only takes away one and another Comfort, but extends our Calamity yet farther, and sweeps away many Blessings, and desirable Things. *Job* was a singular Instance of such a Distress: One Messenger follows at the Heels of another with melancholy Tidings, *Chap. i. 14* — *16, 17, 18.* While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and a Third, and a Fourth; and when stripp'd of all, he said, *Naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked shall I return, v. 21.* His Wealth, his Children, his Servants, all swept away, and himself was smitten with sore Boils from the Sole of the Foot to his Crown, *Chap. ii. 7.* Here was a Trial indeed! The Devil expected *Job* would not be able to stand it: But instead of cursing God, he falls a blessing him. *Ver. 10. What? Shall we receive Good at the Hand of the Lord, and not Evil.*

3. It is a very sore Stroke, when he takes away out of the World very valuable and useful Persons; who have been, and were likely still to be very serviceable, very delightful Comforts in the Families or Churches to which they belonged, and in the Places where they lived.

Such as are eminent for Wisdom, Piety and Zeal, whose exemplary Conversation shines with a convincing, amiable Lustre;

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how useful were such in every Relation and Station, whose pious Instructions, serious Discourses, holy Example, and fervent Prayers, render'd them very desirable in Life; the Removal of such is greatly to be lamented: Though it is their Gain, exceeding great Gain, yet we cannot but be sensible of the Want of such holy Persons, hearty Friends to the Interest of Christ, and his Kingdom, who did cry and sigh for the Corruptions of the Times, for the Growth of pernicious Errors, and for the general Spread of Prophaneness, and all manner of Abominations, *Ezek. ix. 4.* When righteous Persons are taken away, it is a very culpable Indolence, if we lay it not to heart, *Isa. lvii. 1.*

4. It is a cutting Stroke, especially when we consider how small the Number is, of such holy, excellent Persons, left behind, and we see but little Hope of having such Losses made up, small Prospect from the rising Generation. When such an eminent, holy, useful Person, is taken away, the Loss is great, for we may say,

There is one *more burning and shining Light* extinguish'd in our World, though now become a bright Star in the Firmament of Glory.

There is a *faithful Witness for Christ* removed from us, one that had Faith, and Zeal, and Resolution, to plead for his Truth,

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Truth, and Cause, and Interest, in such an evil Day.

There is a *praying Saint* taken away, in whom the Spirit of Grace and Supplication dwelt; one that stood in the Gap to turn away the Wrath of God; one that had Power with God, and prevailed (as *Jacob*) for many Blessings. *Hosea* xii. 3, 4. *Yea, he had Power with God, and prevailed.*

Finally, There is one gone, who was very serviceable in *spreading the Savour of Religion* among others; one merciful, kind and beneficent, ready to every good Work. Now, when such are taken away, and so few of that Character remain amongst us, this makes the Stroke the heavier, and it is not easy for us to keep our Minds in a due Frame, to suppress unbecoming Thoughts, and excessive Passions.

II. Let us then see, what should be our Temper and Behaviour under such grievous Strokes of the divine Hand.

*Behold, he taketh away, Who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou?*

It is implied in these Interrogations, that sinful, weak Creatures, are apt to rebel, murmur, repine or dispute, when God takes away. But he can neither be resisted in his Purpose, nor must he be questioned for his Conduct.



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1. It becomes us to take Notice of the Hand of God that gives the Stroke, and to pay the utmost Reverence to him.

1 *Sam.* iii. 18. *It is the Lord. The Lord has taken away,* said *Job*, Chap. i. 21. Whatever be the Means or Instrument of our Calamity, we must look to a higher Cause: We should say as *David*, *Psal.* xxxix. 9. *I opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it.* When God speaks, we should listen to his Voice; and when he lifts up his Hand, we should receive the Correction with Humility and Fear. Not to be sensible of the awful Providence in taking away, especially such whose Continuance here was so desirable for excellent Ends, it is an Argument of much Stupidity; and they who are unmov'd at such Strokes, seem to have strangely forgotten the Exhortation, which speaketh on this wise, *My Son, despise not thou the Chastening of the Lord*, *Heb.* xii. 5-9, 10. Such an Insensibility under the Hand of God, is as different from true Christian Resignation and Patience, as a Lethargy is from the regular and quiet Sleep of Health.

2. Though we must not dispute with God, yet we are allowed humbly to ask him, that he would please to shew us the Cause of his Displeasure, and the End which he has towards us in such Dispensations. *Job* x. 2. *I will say unto God, do not condemn me, shew*  
me



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*me wherefore thou contendest with me.* Tho' we must not say unto God, What dost thou? in a way of Censure and Complaint, yet we may humbly ask for our Instruction, Wherefore God smites with his Rod; for he does nothing in vain, and we must believe that there are very great Reasons and Ends, especially of such awful Strokes, when he takes away very useful Persons; and we should humbly inquire of the Lord, Wherefore he thus contends with us; what is the Cause of his Anger; what is our Offence for which he smites; what is our Duty to which he calls us, by such afflictive Providences.

3. Our Judgments must subscribe fully to the Wisdom and Righteousness of his Disposal: Tho' the Ways of his Providence be sometimes very dark, yet we believe and own, that he does all Things well: *Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne*, Psal. xcvi. 2. We must not quarrel or dispute, as if he were obliged to give us an Account, or as if his Government were liable to any Censure, for *who shall say unto him, What dost thou?* We must condemn our selves, and ought to acknowledge our Sins, which will much better become us than to dispute his Providence. We must not say unto God, What hast thou done? or, Wherefore hast thou done so? But surely it is meet to be said unto God, *I have*  
*been*

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*born Chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done Iniquity, I will do no more,* Job xxxiv. 31, 32. We must justify God under the severest Strokes of his Hand, and not quarrel with him. *Who art thou, O Man, that repliest against God?* It is the Lord, and he can do nothing amiss. *Good is the Word of the Lord which thou hast spoken,* said *Hezekiah,* Isa. xxxix. 8.

4. We must guard against excessive, tumultuous Passions, not give way to any Dejection of Mind, or faint under the Hand of God, as if we had lost our Hope. When God's Hand is lifted up, and the Stroke falls heavy, and cuts deep, we are apt to be amazed, and our Hearts begin to fail, and we are ready to abandon our selves to our unruly Passions, of Fear or Grief, and say, *Our Hope is perished from the Lord.* This is the Evil prohibited, *Fainting,* Heb xii. 5. *Nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.* To prevent such Dejection we are called and encouraged to trust in God, and stay our selves upon his Name; to hope in his Promise and Covenant, and to wait for his Salvation, *Isa. xxvi. 3, 4 Chap. l. 10. Psal. xlii. 11. Why art thou cast down, O my Soul, &c. hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him.* 'Twas a noble pitch of Faith to which *Job* attain'd, when he said, *Tbo' he slay me, yet will I trust in him,* Job xiii. 15.

David

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*David* resorted to an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all Things and sure, when he view'd the Distresses and Breaches that were upon his Family. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *Altho' my House be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, order'd in all Things and sure: This is all my Salvation, and all my Desire, altho' he make it not to grow.*

5. It is a very becoming Disposition, a religious Act requisite in such Cases, when God takes away, to have our Wills resign'd with low Submission to his sovereign, holy Will, to suppress all murmuring Discontent, and uneasy Reluctance, against the Disposals of him who may do as he please. It is our Duty, and our Perfection, to do what God loves, and to love what God does; to obey when he commands, and to be pleased with what he wills. *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it, Psal. xxxix. 9. Who will say unto him, What doest thou? Lord, I have nothing to say, because thou hast done it. It is all well, because it is thy Will. It is the Lord, (said old Eli) let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. iii. 18. David* was thus resigned in a very melancholy Case, 2 Sam. xv. 26. *But if he thus say, I have no Delight in thee: Behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.*

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Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was praying that the bitter Cup might pass from him, yet express'd the fullest Resignation to his Father's Will, *Not my Will, but thine be done*, Luke xxii. 42. Thus we are taught a meek, humble Submission, under the most afflictive Strokes of God's Hand.

6. It is meet that we lie down at the Foot of God, when he takes away with a Stroke our dearest Comforts. We should justify him in all his Proceedings, and adore his infinite Wisdom, Righteousness and Goodness, and reverence his holy sovereign Dominion, and believe his unchangeable Truth and Faithfulness. *Sanctify the Lord God in your Hearts, let him be your Fear and your Dread*, Isa. viii. 13. A godly Fear gives Honour to his high Perfections and holy Government: It becomes us to fall down, and humble our selves under his mighty Hand, with a penitent Sense, and humble Confession of our Sins: It is necessary to bow before him with awful Reverence, and yet approach to him with humble Confidence, and make our earnest Supplications to him through Jesus Christ, our blessed Mediator, for Mercy and Pardon, and Grace to help in Time of need, *Heb. iv. 16.*

Thus it is meet, when God smites us, to be in an adoring Posture. *Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his Footstool; for he is Holy*, Psal. xcix. 5—9. 1 Pet. v. 6.

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We should wait upon him with Hope, that he will cause his Face to shine upon us, *Psal. lxxxv. 7, 8. Shew us thy Mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy Salvation. I will hear what God the Lord will speak: For he will speak Peace unto his People and to his Saints.*

III. What are the Grounds and Reasons of such a religious Temper, and due Behaviour, under the very afflictive Strokes of God's Hand.

1. It is both vain and sinful, to rebel or repine against the Disposals of Providence. His Counsel is immutable, as well as his Power irresistible. *Behold, he taketh away, Who can hinder him?* It is as impossible to hinder, as to alter his Purpose. Who can resist his Will, or defeat his Counsel? None can do it; tho' sinful Men may be so proud, as to fret against his Will, or to find fault with his Providence, yet they cannot change or prevent the Execution of his Purpose.

It is great Folly and Iniquity to quarrel or dispute against his Dispensations. *He is of one Mind, and who can turn him? Job xxiii. 13, 14. He is wise in Heart, and mighty in Strength; Who ever hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? Job ix. 4. Shall the Earth be forsaken for thee? And shall the Rock be removed out of his Place? Job xviii. 4. i. e. Shall the Counsels*



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of God be altered, or the usual Methods of his Government be changed for thee? *Who can hinder him?* His Will is unchangeable, and his Power irresistible. Who can turn him from his Purpose, or prevent his Design? He has infinite, and absolute Power, and when he comes to take away, even the nearest Relatives, the most valuable Comforts, to dissolve Families or destroy Kingdoms; *none can stay his Hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?* Dan. iv. 35. There is no Wisdom, or Policy, or Might, that can defeat his Purpose; *Prov. xxi. 30:* No outward Means can keep off the Stroke of Death, nor can the Power of Prayers and Tears prevent it. If any Thing could be supposed to move God, it is Prayer; but in some Cases this will not do, because God had determined to take away.

2. The absolute Sovereignty of God is a sufficient Reason for our Submission and Patience under the sharpest Strokes of his Hand. He is Lord of all, the highest Majesty; he may do as he please, *Who will say unto him, What dost thou?* None has right to say so; it is intolerable Pride to say so unto him, whose Will is uncontroul'd; the highest Reason, and absolute Rule of all his Works, *Rom. ii. 20, 21.* Nay, but O Man, *who art thou, that repliest against God? Shall the Thing formed, say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* If  
he

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he taketh away with a Stroke, who shall dare to dispute his Will? He is perfectly fit to rule, and has an undoubted Right to do as he please. His Dominion is absolute, *Behold, he taketh away*, and we must not ask him why he does so? Inferiors among Men are liable to be called to an Account by Superiors; but he who is the absolute Lord, and supreme Judge, giveth no Account of any of his Matters. He made all Things, and made them for his own Pleasure, *Rev. iv. 11.* and therefore has a Right to dispose of them as he will. He has given us our Beings, and all our Comforts, and he may take them away according to his own Pleasure, without asking us leave; *Job xxxiii. 12, 13.*

3. *He is great, and we know him not.* His Nature and Perfections are incomprehensible, his Counsels and Ways are unsearchable. He is exalted in his Glory and Power above all Creatures, and there is an infinite Distance between him and us: And shall such poor, weak, finite Creatures as we are, presume to dispute his Will? No! It becomes us to put our Mouths in the Dust, and to adore his Majesty. *He doth great Things past finding out: Yea, and Wonders without Number, Job ix. 10.* He is the great God, who has all Power and Dominion in his Hand; *he sits upon a Throne of Glory, Psal. ciii. 19. Dan. vii. 9, 10. Thousand Thou-*  
*sands*

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sands minister unto him, ten Thousand times ten Thousand stand before him. God proceeds with Job to humble him, by setting forth his own Greatness in his Works. Job, Chap. xxxviii, xxxix, xl, xli. *Who is this that darkneth Counsel by Words without Knowledge? Gird up now thy Loins like a Man, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the Foundations of the Earth? Declare, if thou hast Understanding. Who hath laid the Measures thereof, if thou knowest? or, Who hath stretched the Line upon it? Whereupon are the Foundations thereof fasten'd? or, Who laid the corner Stone thereof? When the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy, &c. Job xxxviii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Wilt thou also disannul my Judgment? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be Righteous? Hast thou an Arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a Voice like him? Deck thy self now with Majesty and Excellency, and array thy self with Glory and Beauty. Cast abroad the Rage of thy Wrath, and behold every one that is proud and abase him. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low, and tread down the Wicked in their Place. Hide them in the Dust together, and bind their Faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee, that thine own right Hand can save thee, &c. Chap. xl. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. Shall we not hum-*

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humbly submit our selves to this great God, when he lays his Hand upon us? and say, *Behold, he taketh away, Who can hinder him?*

4. He is perfect in Wisdom. His Counsels are the Result of infinite Knowledge and Understanding: He sees all Things in one View, and has before him a clear Prospect of the End and Design of all his Providences, and of all the Ways and Means by which his Counsels are to be accomplished: He cannot err in Judgment, nor mistake in any of the Methods of his Government; and what we cannot comprehend is order'd by a perfect Wisdom. We are fond and foolish, and apt to judge amiss; to think that such Things would be best for us, or might have been otherwise disposed, but we are unfit Judges: *God is wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in Working*, Isa. xxviii. 29. It was a proper Expostulation *Elihu* uses with *Job*, Chap. xxxiv. 33. *Should it be according to thy Mind?* There are excellent Ends to be answered, which we are not apprized of, by such trying Dispensations. *What I do thou knowest not now*, (said our Lord to *Peter*) *but thou shalt know hereafter*, John xiii. 7. God will be glorified, and he knows how to bring Good to his People out of the sharpest Trials. *Rom. viii. 28. And we know that all Things work together for good to them that love God.* And if God be glorified



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rified we ought to be pleased and satisfied. It is enough that we know, that he is perfect in Wisdom; and very good Purposes will be answered, both for his Glory and the real Advantage of his Servants, by such dark and afflictive Dispensations.

5. The Lord is Holy and Just, and whatever he takes away, he can do no wrong. *He is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works*, Psal. cxlv. 17. The essential Rectitude and Holiness of his Nature runs through all his Government, so that 'tis impossible he should do any Thing that is unjust. Tho' his Providences sometimes are very dark and awful, yet *Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne*, Psal. xcvii. 2. *He is the Rock, his Work is perfect: For all his Ways are Judgment; a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, just and right is he.* We have sinned, but he is Righteous, and he punisheth us less than our Iniquities deserve. *Far be it from the Almighty that he should pervert Judgment: He will not lay upon Man more than is right, that he should enter into Judgment with God*, Job xxxiv. 10, 11, 12—23. This is a good Argument for our Submission to the severest Strokes of his Hand.

6. It is necessary for us also to remember, That the Lord is very good, and full of Compassion. He doth not lay upon us what he might do; *He stays his rough Wind in*  
the



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*the Day of his east Wind.* It might have been a great deal worse, for tho' he hath taken away this and the other Comfort, he might have taken away all and done us no wrong. This is a great Reason for our quiet Resignation: *Shall we receive Good at the Hand of the Lord, and not Evil:* The Good we receive is much greater, and more abundant than the Evil. O let the Goodness and Tenderneſs of God our Father, compose us to humble Submission under all Afflictions. *Truly God is good to Israel, to them that are of a clean Heart,* Psal. lxxiii. 1. *David,* notwithstanding all his Afflictions and Troubles (and he had a great many) yet ſays, *Thou haſt dealt well with thy Servant, O Lord, according to thy Word,* Psal. cxix. 65. The Lord is good, and doth good; he doeth good to his People by all their Trials. *Ver. 68—71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Happy is the Man whom the Lord correcteth,* Job v. 17. He chaſtēneth his Children for their Profit, *Heb. xii. 5—11.* All the Strokes of his Rod upon them proceed from paternal Love, and are intended for their Good. Though theſe dark Providences ſeem to be againſt us (as old *Jacob* ſaid) yet they ſhall in the End make for us, as he found it, *Gen. xlii. 36.*

7. We muſt know alſo, that it is a dangerous Evil to diſpute the Providences of God, or repine under the Strokes of his Hand, it

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must be a great Provocation so to do, since he has a Right to dispose of us and ours as he please: It is quarrelling against his Sovereignty, Wisdom, Holiness and Goodness: Surely this is a great Evil; and we may fear lest he should be angry with us, and take away more from us. When his Hand is lifted up, and he smites us, our best way is to lie down at his Foot, 1 *Pet.* v. 6. The Unbelief, Pride, and Impatience, that enter into such a Disputing with the Almighty, are very culpable, and expose us to his severe Repentment. *Woe to him that striveth with his Maker, Isa.* xlv. 9.

8. Let it be consider'd farther, That as to good Persons who are thus taken away, tho' it be a Loss to the World, a great Loss to the Family, or to the Church, yet they are taken away from the Evil to come, and are removed to a better Place: God hath dealt well with them, tho' he corrects us in taking them away. *Isa.* lvii. 1, 2. The Day of Death is to them better than the Day of their Birth: They are gone to rest; to rest in the Bosom of Christ. It is what departed Saints did long wish and pray for, that they might be prepared for that happy State, and they rejoiced in the Hope of that Glory to which they are now taken. *Blessed are the Dead, which die in the Lord; for they rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them, Rev.* xiv. 13. They are taken

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ken from us, but at the same Time we must remember, God takes them out of a sinful, perplexing World, and takes them to the full Enjoyment of himself. When righteous Persons are taken away, it is a great Loss to us, but a vast Happiness to them; for such are taken away from all Evil; and put into the Possession of the most consummate Felicity.

They are taken away from all the Evil that was in themselves, from all their Corruptions under which they groaned, from the Evil of all Temptations, from the Evil of a wicked World, which is very grievous to a gracious Heart, and from all the vexatious Oppositions and Hatred of the Enemies of God and Religion; finally, from seeing and feeling any of the Judgments and Calamities that may come upon the World, and upon the House of God, 1 Pet. iv. 17.

They enter into Rest, eternal Rest: *Unto you who are troubled rest with us*, 2 Thes. i. 7. They rest from all Labour, Pain, Sickness and Sorrow, and enter into a Fulness of Joy, a Perfection of Holiness, and a Perpetuity of Happiness, *Psal. xvi. 11.* To such faithful Servants Christ will say, *Enter ye into the Joy of your Lord*, Matt. xxv. 23.

## APPLICATION.

I. We should regulate our Affections towards Creature Comforts, seeing they are

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so liable to be taken away. Bless God for them, and make a good Use of them, but don't trust in them: *Cease ye from Man, whose Breath is in his Nostrils, for where-in is he to be accounted of?* Isa. ii. 22. Set loose to the dearest Enjoyments, for God may come, and quickly take them away from us.

II. Let us be concerned to glorify him, with low Submission and holy Fear, when he takes away. Take heed of repining or fainting. Let us adore his Sovereignty, and humble our selves in his sight. O how reasonable and necessary is it to submit, and at the same Time to consider wisely of his Doing, that we may know our Duty under such afflictive Providences. *Heb. xii. 5.*

III. We should retire to God himself with greater Satisfaction, as our chief Good, trust in him as our Covenant God, and believe, that whatever he takes away, he will not *take away his loving Kindness* from us, *nor suffer his Faithfulness to fail*, Psal. lxxxix. 34, 35. *Habak. iii. 17, 18.*

What has been said upon the Head of Submission, is all requisite to direct, and assist the Practice under the heavy Stroke of the Almighty's Hand, that is the sad Occasion of this Discourse, I am very sensible the Loss is great, and do tenderly sympathize with mourning Relatives,



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I could justly say a great many excellent Things of this our dear Friend, whom God has taken away from us, a Person greatly beloved, and deservedly respected by them that knew her. It was not agreeable to her to have any Thing said in her Praise; but I judge it useful and necessary to give some Account of her, that may set forth the Riches, and Glory of Divine Grace, so eminently displayed in her, and at the same Time to commend Religion, in her bright Example, to others, for their Choice and Imitation.

Not to mention her rare Endowments of Nature, or the Quality of her honourable Birth and Education, I shall only observe briefly what she was by Grace; and none more ready to ascribe all to Grace than she was.

It was very evident, she was a sincere, humble Christian, who hated all Guile, and had the lowest Thoughts of her self. She had experienc'd a great and thorough Work in her Conversion, as appear'd in the Progress of her Sanctification, and in her close Walking with God. She had been led by the convincing Spirit into a great Sense of indwelling Sin, which laid a deep Foundation of Humility in her; and the same Holy Spirit had also given her a spiritual Knowledge, and lively Apprehension of the Excellency and Glory of Christ, his Person, and mediatorial Character, and he was exceeding precious to her Soul. She could say

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*with much Satisfaction, Surely in Jehovah  
have I Righteousness and Strength.*

I am not able to describe in Words what I saw and knew of her serious Frame, and holy Walk. She lived much in the View of God, and of the heavenly World. She had a good Judgment, and improved Knowledge of the pure Doctrines of the glorious Gospel. She had a zealous Regard for those Truths of the greatest Importance in our Religion, the Doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity, Election, free Justification by the imputed Righteousness of Christ, Union with him, &c. She had a great Sense and Relish of these Doctrines of Grace, and tasted the Joy and Comfort of them in her own Soul.

How unable was she to bear, either the growing Errors, or the spreading Impiety of the Day !

She was a great Lover of Christ, and did shew it in her Value for all that bore his Image : A true Christian Charity and Moderation happily attemper'd and govern'd her Zeal for the Honour of Christ.

She was eminent for Holiness of Conversation, very tenderly, and strictly Conscientious. She greatly loved the Habitation of God's House ; and it was an observable Excellence in her, that she was very devout in Worship : Her Seriousness in that Employment was uncommon. She had such a  
great

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great Sense of God, that she thought the important Concerns of Religion deserved the utmost Intention of the Mind. She employ'd much of her Time in private Exercises of Devotion, wherein she found so much Pleasure and Advantage. She had no idle Hours, but what she knew how to fill up to the best Purposes.

She was a very affectionate and tender Relative, and faithful Friend, very desirous of promoting their Welfare both spiritual and temporal. Indeed, she was of so kind and compassionate a Disposition, that she sympathized with all about her, and made their Troubles very much her own. In a word, her Life was spent in close Communion with God, and she has now changed her Place (as one said) but not her Company, being admitted into the immediate Presence, and full Vision of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

God has taken her away, but he has taken her to himself, as it was said of *Enoch*, Gen. v. 20.

It is her unspeakable Gain, but her Removal is a great Loss to the Family, and to the Church, to which she belong'd; and I know it is sensibly felt, and tenderly lamented.

But I refrain! May the God of all Comfort give to you, her dear Relatives, much Comfort, for you greatly need it; may you  
be

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be enabled to the Practice of that humble Submission, which this Discourse was design'd to recommend to you; and say, *Be- hold, he taketh away, Who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou?*

It is a just Alleviation of your Grief, that she is joined to the glorious Assembly above, and makes an Addition to the happy Number among her pious Ancestors there.

Suppose then she now speaks to you, *My dear Sisters, and my other Relatives and Friends, Weep not for me; I have fought the good Fight, I have finish'd my Course, I have kept the Faith, and I have now reach'd the End of my Faith and Hope, and of all my Desires and Prayers. The eternal Counsel of God, all the good Pleasure of his Goodness is accomplish'd in my everlasting Happiness. O press forward with Resolution and Courage in your Christian Race, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your Faith! Watch and pray, and hope unto the End, for he is faithful who hath promised: I now find him so. O love the Lord, and serve him with all your Powers! Do all the Good you can, and promote the Interest of Truth and Holiness, which is the very Interest of Christ.*



F I N I S.